

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

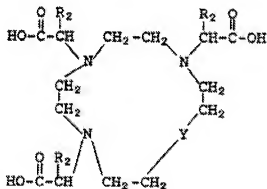
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An excipient for a metal chelate contrast agent, wherein said metal chelate contrast agent, comprises a metal ion complexed with an organic ligand, said excipient having the formula



wherein X and X' are calcium, L' is an organic ligand which may be the same as the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent or may be another organic ligand which has a greater affinity for the metal ion of the metal chelate contrast agent than for calcium or zinc, and wherein m is 1 and n is 2 and wherein the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are independently selected from compounds of the formula



wherein



R₁ is hydroxypropyl and R₂ is methyl.

2-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) The excipient of claim 1 wherein the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are ~~independently selected from each~~ 1,4,7,10-tetra-azacyclododecane-1,4,7-triacetic acid, 1,4,7-tris-(carboxymethyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane, N,N-bis[2-[bis(carboxymethyl)amino]ethyl]glycine, DTPA-bis methylamide, DTPA-bis morpholinoamide and DTPA-bis 1,2-dihydroxypropylamide.

8. (Previously presented) The excipient of claim 1 wherein the organic ligand of the metal chelate contrast agent and L' are the same organic ligand.

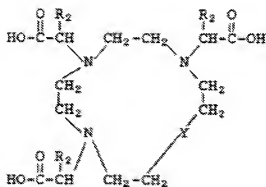
9. (Currently amended) A contrast agent composition for use in magnetic resonance, x-ray, ultrasound and radio-diagnostic imaging comprising

a contrast agent comprising a metal ion, M, complexed with an organic ligand, L; and

a complex salt excipient of the formula



wherein X and X' are calcium, L' is an organic ligand which may be the same as the organic ligand L ~~of the metal chelate contrast agent~~ or may be another organic ligand which has a greater affinity for the metal ion M of the ~~metal chelate~~ contrast agent than for calcium or zinc, and wherein m is 1 and n is 2.; and wherein L and L' are independently selected from compounds of the formula



wherein



R₁ is hydroxypropyl and R₂ is methyl and

a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier therefor.

10-14 (Canceled)

15. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 9 wherein L and L' are each independently selected from 1, 4, 7, 10-tetraazacyclododecane-1,4,7-triacetic acid, 1,4,7-tris(carboxymethyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane, N,N-bis[2-bis(carboxymethyl)-amino]ethylglycine, DTPA-bis-methylamide, 1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane-1,4,7,10-tetraacetic acid, DTPA-bis-morpholinoamide and DTPA-bis-1,2-dihydroxypropylamide.

16. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein L and L' are the same organic ligand.

17. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 9 wherein the mole ratio of said complex salt to said ~~metal chelate~~ contrast agent is between about 0.05 and 10 percent.

18. (Original) The composition of claim 9 wherein said metal ion is selected from paramagnetic metal atoms, lanthanide series elements, yttrium, and the transition series elements.

19. (Original) The composition of claim 18 wherein said paramagnetic metals are selected from gadolinium(III), dysprosium(III), manganese(II), manganese(III), chromium(III), iron(II) and iron(III).

20. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 9 wherein said metal ion M complexed with an organic ligand L is gadolinium(III) 1,4,7-tris(carboxymethyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane and said excipient is calcium bis[1,4,7-tris(carboxy-methyl)-10-(2'-hydroxypropyl)-1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecanatocalcium(II)].

21-46 (Canceled)